

Association of Infant Exclusive Breast Feeding with Household Food Security and Maternal Mental Health

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Abstract

Background: Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is emphasized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the most desirable way of infant feeding in the first 6 months. EBF has beneficial health effects on mothers and infants. The aim of this study was to examine factors influencing EBF, with emphasis on household food security status and maternal mental health.

Methods: This cross-sectional study was carried out on 325 women referring to community health centers in west Tehran. Data were collected using questionnaires, including Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) and the USDA (US Department of Agriculture) 18-item questionnaire. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and analytical methods such as the chi-squared test, *t* test and logistic regression with SPSS 22.

Results: The prevalence of EBF was 82.5% (CI = 0.70, 0.94), 63.9% (CI = 0.57, 0.70) and 72.3% (CI = 0.62, 0.82) in 3-month, 3-6-month and 6-8-month-old infants, respectively. The results of this study showed a significant association between EBF and infant gender satisfaction ($P < 0.001$, OR = 4.85, CI = 2.12, 11.12), economic satisfaction score ($P = 0.028$, OR = 0.82, CI = 0.69, 0.98), infant birth weight ($P = 0.013$, OR = 0.99, CI = 0.99, 1.00) and unwanted pregnancy ($P = 0.098$, OR = 1.82, CI = 0.89, 3.70). However, we did not find any significant association between EBF and other variables such as household food security status, mother's postpartum depression, parents' education and age, type of delivery and pregnancy numbers.

Conclusion: Infant gender satisfaction, economic satisfaction, unwanted pregnancy and infant birth weight were the significant factors for predicting EBF in this study. Since EBF is important for infants and mothers' health, policy-makers should devise strategies to promote and encourage EBF in the society.

Keywords: Exclusive breast feeding, Food insecurity, Postpartum depression, Socio-economic, Unwanted pregnancy

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